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LETTER DATED 16 MAY 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 25 April 1997 addressed to you by Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq (S/1997/338), concerning the severe and deliberate procrastination in the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding and Security Council resolution 986 (1995), and the responsibility the United States of America bears for that, since it puts holds on and rejects many of the contracts submitted to the Security Council Committee established by resolution 661 (1990).

I regret to have to inform you and the members of the Security Council that at the present time, when only three weeks remain of the six-month period during which resolution 986 (1995) and the Memorandum of Understanding were to be implemented, the status of implementation is going from bad to worse. This is due to the position taken by the United States with a view to obstructing and delaying implementation of the above-mentioned texts, thereby preventing sufficient quantities of foodstuffs and medicines from reaching the Iraqi people.

A cursory glance at the statistics relating to the processing of contracts for foodstuffs, medicines and other humanitarian supplies shows that, as at 15 May 1997, only 217 of the 570 contracts submitted to the Security Council Committee established by resolution 661 (1990) had been approved. The United States of America had put holds on or rejected 156 contracts.

The United States of America has put holds on many contracts without giving any reason for doing so. When reasons have been given, they have been unconvincing and unsubstantiated claims: the medicines requested did not appear on the distribution plan, the number of emergency vehicles was greater than needed, or the quantities of medicines in the contracts exceeded the quantities requested, and so forth time. Meanwhile, however, the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations has been gathering all the evidence necessary to prove that the contents of the contracts complied with the Memorandum of Understanding and the distribution plan.

Such a negative picture of the state of implementation of resolution 986 (1995) and the Memorandum of Understanding renders the urgent intervention of yourself and the members of the Security Council necessary, in order to urge

the United States of America to abandon its tactics of obstruction and delay, which injure the people of Iraq and undermine the credibility of the United Nations and Security Council resolutions.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative